

DNREC Division of Fish & Wildlife encourages boaters to ‘Spring Aboard’ for boating season by taking a safety course

National campaign urges boaters to ‘Keep Your Edge’ through education

DOVER – DNREC’s Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police Office of Boating Safety and Education joins the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) in encouraging boaters to “Spring Aboard,” a March 17-23 nationwide campaign to prepare for boating season by enrolling in a boating safety course.

Under Delaware law, all persons born on or after Jan. 1, 1978 must successfully complete a boating safety course in order to operate a boat or personal watercraft in Delaware waters. Boaters required to complete a boating safety course must carry their boating safety card with them at all times while operating a vessel as proof of course completion. Other boaters are encouraged to take a boating safety course to sharpen their boating skills.

A wide variety of courses are available to fit every boater’s schedule, from classroom courses offered by the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and United States Power Squadrons to online offerings available anytime day or night. During “Spring Aboard,” several Delaware-approved online boating safety education providers offer courses at a discounted price or other incentives. Delaware’s Office of Boating Safety and Education also provides volunteer instructors for private and

non-profit organizations, schools, clubs, and the general public to educate boaters on skills and seamanship.

Delaware's course covers the rules and regulations for the state's waterways, including appropriate speed limits, responsible boating skills and awareness, and how to distinguish navigational aids and water depths. Also covered are weather tips, information about basic engine mechanics, required and recommended safety equipment, what to do if a Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police officer stops your vessel, and the dangers of boating under the influence.

Operator inexperience and inattention continue to be leading factors in accidents and deaths on our nation's waterways according to the [U.S. Coast Guard Recreational Boating Statistics](#). Where boating safety course participation was known, 81 percent of deaths occurred on boats where the operator did not receive boating safety instruction.

NASBLA is a national nonprofit organization that works to develop public policy for recreational boating safety, and represents recreational boating authorities in all 50 states and the U.S. territories, including Delaware. Through a national network of thousands of professional educators, law enforcement officers, and volunteers, NASBLA serves more than 73.5 million American boaters.

For more information, including Delaware's boating safety course schedule and access to the online Delaware Boating Handbook, please click [Delaware Boating Safety](#), www.springaboard.org, or contact Lt. John McDerby at 302-739-9913 or email John.mcderby@delaware.gov.

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